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The issue of waste management in Romania

The article addresses the field of waste management, which is one of the most important issues facing Romania in terms of environmental protection. The local public administration authorities play a particularly important role in ensuring the implementation of the waste management obligations assumed by Romania through the Treaty of Accession to the European Union. The first and one of the most important stages in the implementation of environmental policy is the correct and complete transposition of the European Union waste management directives. However, there are also EU Directives that have not been transposed into national law, the deadline being exceeded, so Romania risks financial penalties through infringement. The second stage is their implementation on the ground, which is generally a challenge, caused among other things, by a lack of adequate planning, coordination and funding. However, the local authorities responsible for the implementation of these commitments manage to achieve the infrastructure required for the integrated waste management system in line with EU directives, as is the case with Bihor County through the project "Integrated Waste Management System in Bihor County".

1. Introduction

Waste management is one of the most important issues Romania is facing in terms of environmental protection. This concerns the collection, transport, treatment, recovery and disposal of waste.

The local public administration authorities play a particularly important role in ensuring the implementation of the waste management obligations assumed by Romania through the Treaty of Accession to the European Union.¹

Although environmental issues have older roots, it was only in 1970 that the European Commission first declared in an official communication to the Council the need for an EU environmental program. Appearing on the European agenda, environmental concerns have a distinct character when the Club of Rome has signaled a decrease in natural resources and a rapid deterioration in water, air and soil quality.²

In 1972 the first environmental policy of the European community was adopted. Since then, seven environmental action programs have been developed in the EEC and the EU since 1973, 1977, 1983, 1987, 1992, 2001 and 2013.

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¹ Romania's Treaty of Accession to the European Union ratified by Law no. 157/2005, *Official Gazette*, 2005/465.

² R. Pascu: *Waste Management*, par. 1., Sibiu, University Publishing House "Lucian Blaga", 2009, 19.

The Seventh EAP – Environment Action Program was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in November 2013 and covers the period up to 2020. Through this program, the EU has agreed to make greater efforts to protect our natural capital, Stimulate growth and innovation characterized by resource efficiency and low carbon emissions and protect the health and well-being of people by respecting the natural limits of the planet.

EU waste management directives focus on creating a 'recyclable society', raising the responsibility of the manufacturer and at the same time pointing to new conditions for the burying of non-recoverable waste. The products supplied must be environmentally friendly both during and after their use in the 'waste'. A modern production and consumption society interferes through various paths with closed natural cycles.

Waste management is one of these interferences. The volume of waste generation has increased considerably, over the past decades, waste has become increasingly dangerous for the environment. The concentration of population in urban areas also creates serious environmental problems. The company year-on-year is required to set stricter targets for waste management, giving priority to recycling.³

Environmental Action Plans are a tool for community support in prioritizing environmental issues and solving them at local / regional level. These require the development of a collective vision by assessing the quality of the environment at any given time, identifying existing environmental problems, establishing the most appropriate strategies for solving them and allocating implementation actions leading to a real improvement of the environment and public health.

The European Union's environmental policy is supported by a number of organizations and institutions involved in its preparation, definition and implementation. These organizations also liaise with the governments of the Member States, with various employer and professional organizations, non-governmental organizations, etc. The most relevant institutions involved in Community environmental policy are: the European Commission, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment – directly responsible for the development and implementation of environmental policy, the Council of Ministers – the Council of Ministers of the Environment, the European Court of Justice, The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Environment Agency, the Ecological Interest Groups.

2. EU directives on waste management

The Directives are framework regulations, the objectives of which must be achieved by the internal legislation of each Member State within the time limit set in the Directive.

³ R. Pascu: *Waste Management*, par. 5., Sibiu, University Publishing House "Lucian Blaga", 2009, 20.

The choice of form and means of implementation is made by Member States, taking into account the objectives of the Directive, which are binding on each Member State. Under these circumstances, the judge does not directly apply the provisions of the Directive but rather the national rules adopted to achieve the objectives of the Directive.

European Directives transposed into Romanian legislation have led to a new approach to the waste problem, paying attention to the need to protect and save natural resources, reduce management costs and find effective solutions to reduce pollution. Thus, the Community directives on waste management transposed into national law are:⁴

(a) *Directive 2008/98/EC* of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste: its objective is to protect the environment and human health by emphasizing the importance of adequate waste management and the use of recovery and recycling techniques to reduce resource pressures, and improve their use. Although Romania had to ensure the entry into force of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive by 12 December 2010, it was fully transposed by 2016 only by Emergency Ordinance no. 68/2016 for amending and completing the Law no. 211/2011 on waste regime.

Member States shall ensure that waste management plans and waste generation prevention programs are evaluated at least once every six years and revised as appropriate.⁵ Despite previous Commission warnings, the Romanian authorities have failed to fulfill their obligation to review and update their national waste management plan and waste prevention program. This review should have taken place at the latest in 2013. The Commission initiated the infringement procedure in September 2015 and sent a reasoned opinion to Romania in May 2016 requesting the authorities to quickly adopt these basic instruments under the legislation in the field of waste.⁶

(b) *Council Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006* of the European Parliament and of the Council on shipments of waste: establishes procedures and control regimes for the transfer of waste according to the origin, destination and route of the shipment, the type of waste shipped and the type of treatment applicable to waste at destination. The Regulation entered into force on the third day after its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union, i.e. on 14 June 2006. As Romania joined the European Union on 1 January 2007, pursuant to Article 64 (2) and (3) Of the Regulation, it shall be applied from the date of accession or at the latest by 12 July 2007. Its transposition into national law was made by the GD no. 788 of 17 July 2007 laying down certain measures for the application of Regulation (EC) 1.013 / 2006 on the transfer of waste.

⁴ *Waste Management Guide*, Sibiu, Press House and Tribuna Publishing House.

⁵ Directive 2008/98 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives.

⁶ European Commission: Waste: Commission refers Romania to Court of Justice for failing to adopt national measures on waste management and waste prevention, IP/17/1047 press release, Homepage of the European Commission, in: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1047_en.htm (27.04.2017.)

This judgment creates the institutional framework for the direct application of the Regulation.

(c) *Council Directive 1999/31/EC* on the landfill of waste, as amended and supplemented: aims to provide, through strict technical and operational waste and landfill requirements, measures, procedures and guidelines to prevent or Reduce as far as possible the negative effects on the environment and, in particular, the pollution of surface water, groundwater, soil, air and the environment in general, including the greenhouse effect, as well as any other subsequent risks to human health Which waste disposal activities may have throughout the life cycle of the landfill. This directive has been transposed into national law by H.G. no. 349/2005 on the storage of waste (completed by the Government Decision no 210/2007 amending and completing some normative acts transposing the *acquis communautaire* in the field of environmental protection).

Despite previous warnings from the Commission, Romania has not taken action against 68 non-compliant landfills. Under the directive, Member States must recover and dispose of the waste in a way that does not endanger human health and the environment, prohibiting the abandonment, destruction or uncontrolled disposal of waste. Romania was obliged to close down and rehabilitate these underground municipal and industrial landfills by July 16, 2009. Due to insufficient progress in addressing the issue, the Commission sent a further reasoned opinion in September 2015, urging the Romanian authorities to deal adequately of over 100 uncontrolled landfills that - although not in operation – still pose a threat to human health and the environment. Some progress has been made, but for 68 landfills the necessary measures – to clean and close them - have not yet been finalized by December 2016. In an effort to urge Romania to speed up the process, the Commission calls Romanian authorities before the Court of Justice of the EU.

(d) *Directive 2000/76/EC* of the European Parliament and of the Council on incineration: aims at preventing or limiting as far as possible the negative effects of incineration and co-incineration on the environment, and in particular emissions from air, soil, surface water And groundwater, and the risks they pose to human health. The transposition of the Directive into national legislation was achieved through H.G. no. 128 of 14 February 2002 on incineration of waste, modified and completed by H.G. no. 268/2005 and H.G. no. 427/2010.

(e) *Council Directive 86/278/EEC* on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture: the purpose of this Directive is to regulate the use of sewage sludge in agriculture in such a way as to prevent harmful effects on soil, Vegetation, animals and humans, encouraging their proper use. The legislation transposing this directive is made up of Law no. 211 / on the waste regime and Order no. 344/708/2004 for the approval of the Technical Norms regarding the protection of the environment and especially of the soils, when using sewage sludge in agriculture, completed by Order no. 27/2007.

(f) *Directive 2012/19/EU* of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste electrical and electronic equipment: sets out measures to protect the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the negative effects of the generation and management of WEEE, such as And by reducing the overall impacts of resource use

and improving the efficiency of its use in accordance with Articles 1 and 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC, thus contributing to sustainable development. Romania's obligation as a Member State of the European Union to ensure the transposition of Directive 2012/19/EU into national law by 14 February 2014 at the latest has not been fulfilled. As a result of the non-compliance with the transposition deadline, the European Commission initiated the pre-litigation procedure for failure to fulfill obligations under Art. 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Romania receiving from the European Commission Notification of delay no. 4.835 of March 31, 2014, as on 17 October 2014 the European Commission issued Reasoned Opinion no. 15,710 to which Romania responded on 16 December 2014, committing itself to adopt the normative act transposing Directive 2012/19/EU by the end of the first semester of 2015. Thus, O.U.G. No. 5 of 2 April 2015 on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment.

Compliance with European law and its rank with respect to national law is an obligation of Romania as a member state of the European Union and an obligation of judges to apply the norms of law. Breach of this obligation may result in legal liability (fines and damages). However, there are also EU Directives that have not been transposed into national law, the deadline being exceeded, so Romania risks financial penalties through infringement. For example, Directive 2015/720 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste to reduce the consumption of thin plastic carrier bags with a deadline for adoption by 27 November 2016.

By an address dated 23 January 2017, the European Commission informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the deadline for transposition of Directive (EU) 2015/720 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 amending Directive 94/62/EC as regards the reduction of the consumption of thin plastic bags or the financial penalties that the Court of Justice may impose on the basis of Article 260 (3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). To avoid sanctions that may come from the EU, the Government has decided to promote a bill (publicly debated by April 21, 2017 on the website of the Ministry of the Environment) prohibiting the introduction and marketing on the domestic market of the plastic carrier bags with a handle. In address no. K2/186, sent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, states that the Romanian authorities have two months from the date of receipt of the letter of formal notice, namely until March 24, 2017, to reply, In Case 2017/0184, action for failure to fulfill obligations to communicate the national measures transposing Directive 2015/720/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 amending Directive 94/62/EC as regards the reduction of consumption Of thin plastic transport bags.

3. Normative acts regulating waste management in Romania.

The framework legislation includes a multitude of normative acts as follows: Law 211/2011 on waste regime, republished in 2014; Decision no. 1470 of 9 September 2004 on the approval of the National Waste Management Strategy and the National Waste Management Plan (The first strategic document was approved in 2004 for the period 2003 - 2013, three years before Romania's accession to the European Union. Was carried out in accordance with the objectives of the national environmental protection and sustainable development policy at that time and underpinned the elaboration of the National Waste Management Plan (PNGD), both of which were approved by Government Decision No 1470/9 September 2004 On the basis of these two documents, the Regional Waste Management Plans (PRGD) were developed in the period 2005 - 2006, the County Waste Management Plans (PJGD) for the period 2007-2009, but also the 'Master Plans' and the Feasibility Studies for The implementation of integrated waste management systems for financing through SOPs Environment (2007 – 2013) The National Waste Management Strategy (SNGD), subject to adoption by this Government Decision, is a new version and aims to direct Romania towards a 'recycling society' by: prioritizing waste management efforts in accordance with the hierarchy of waste; Encouraging prevention of waste generation and reuse for greater resource efficiency; Developing and expanding separate waste collection systems to promote high-quality recycling; Development / implementation of recycling and / or recovery technologies and / or facilities with high yield for the extraction and use of the raw material from the waste; Supporting the recovery of waste energy, as appropriate, for non-recyclable waste; Reducing the quantities of waste disposed of by storage); Decision no. 856 of 16 August 2002 on waste management records and the approval of the list of wastes, including hazardous wastes; Order no. 1364/1499 of 14 December 2006 approving regional waste management plans; Order no. 1385 of December 29, 2006 approving the Public Participation Procedure for the elaboration, modification or revision of the waste management plans adopted or approved at national, regional and county level; Order no. 951 of 6 June 2007 approving the Methodology for the elaboration of the regional and county waste management plans.

4. EU report on the waste management problem in Romania

Romania has significantly improved its environmental performance since its accession in 2007. Although Romanian legislation accurately reflects the environmental requirements agreed at EU level, their implementation on the ground is generally a challenge, determined, among other things, a lack of adequate planning, coordination and funding. The gaps in implementation are problematic in several areas, especially in waste management and waste water treatment. Romania is encouraged to make better use of EU funds to meet these challenges and strengthen the coordination of its administrative mechanisms.

The main challenges facing Romania in implementing EU environmental policy and legislation are: improving compliance with EU waste and urban waste legislation in order to achieve EU targets, given that The final deadlines provided for in the Accession Treaty are approaching; Improve coordination and strengthen the administrative capacity of authorities and agencies involved in the implementation of EU legislation, in particular on water and waste management and the protection and management of Natura 2000 sites, as part of a broader strategy to strengthen public administration .

Romania could get better results in areas where there is already a good base of knowledge and good practice. These opportunities relate in particular to bringing together the best solutions in comprehensive and realistic waste management and prevention plans based on a broad public participation process; Removing obstacles to proper and targeted use of EU funds to support the implementation of EU requirements; Using the next river basin management cycle to improve monitoring networks and water status assessment methods. Romania could share with other countries the innovative approaches it has developed. A good example is the 2012 Green Recycling Laboratory, awarded with the gold medal for excellence in the SME category at the European Social Responsibility Awards (RSI).⁷

In 2017, the transition period granted to Romania through the Accession Treaty for the implementation of the Landfill Directive will end and Romania will have to close the 101 non-compliant landfills. Estimates show that full implementation of waste legislation could create over 29,100 jobs in Romania and increase annual turnover in the waste sector by more than 3 billion euros.

5. The waste management system

EU waste management policies highlight the importance of an integrated approach to waste management, which includes the construction of waste disposal facilities together with waste prevention and recycling measures, in line with the principles of waste prevention and negative impacts; Recovery of waste by recycling; reuse; Treatment and final disposal of waste safely – ecological landfills, where there is no possibility of recovery.

In order to comply with the EU Directives, Romania obtained transitional periods up to 2017 for certain types of landfills in the negotiation process: municipal waste landfills – transitional periods until 2017; Temporary storage of hazardous industrial waste – 2009; Non-hazardous industrial landfills - transition periods until 2013. A total of 177 landfills (about 490 ha) located in urban areas have to stop storage activity between 2017 and 2013. Also, in accordance with the Accession Treaty, Romania Must ensure the gradual reduction of waste deposited in the 101 non-compliant municipal warehouses. Under Directive 1999/31, Romania should reduce the annual amount of biodegradable waste deposited to 2.4 million tons by 2013.

⁷ European Commission: *Assessment of the implementation of EU environmental policies, Country Report – Romania*.

This target of 2.4 million tons was set in accordance with the provisions of Art. 5 of the Directive and represents 50% of the total quantity (by weight) of biodegradable municipal waste produced in 1995. Other transition periods were obtained for certain targets in the packaging waste sector up to 2013, aiming at a considerable reduction in the amount of landfilled waste.

The National Waste Management Plan, the Regional Waste Management Plans and the County Waste Management Plans have been developed as part of a process of partnership consultation with regional stakeholders that have identified and prioritized investment needs at regional / In order to fulfill the commitments undertaken for this sector.

Local authorities are responsible for implementing these commitments in line with the national strategy for public services.

The Sectoral Operational Program Environment funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Priority Axis 2 has the following objectives: to increase the coverage of the municipal waste collection population and the corresponding quality management services and to acceptable tariffs; Reducing the amount of landfilled waste; Increasing the amount of recycled and recovered waste; Setting up efficient waste management structures; Reducing the number of historically contaminated sites.⁸

The projects funded under this priority axis cover the area of a county and will provide the necessary infrastructure for the integrated waste management system, starting with collection, transport, treatment and final disposal.

6. Integrated waste management system in Bihor county

Regarding the EU waste management directives, they are applicable in Bihor County through the project presented below, a project initiated by the local public administration - the Bihor County Council.

The project 'Integrated Solid Waste Management System in Bihor County - Phase I' was financed through the Sectoral Operational Program Environment, Priority Axis 2 'Development of Integrated Waste Management Systems and Rehabilitation of Historically Contaminated Sites', Key Area of Intervention 2.1. 'Development of Integrated Waste Management Systems and Extension of Waste Management Infrastructure', value (at signing) 199,895,470 lei, financing contract period (date of signing / completion date): 26.03.2014 / 31.12.2015, period Project implementation: 18.09.2014 – 31.12.2015.

Compliance with environmental policies in the waste management sector implied a systematic, long-term approach that would continue beyond the 2007-13 programming period, thus signing in 2016 the financing contract for the second phase of the 'Integrated Solid Waste Management in Bihor County'. The total value of the financing contract is 104,583,002 lei, obtained through the Large Infrastructure Operational Program 2014-2020, Priority Axis 3 'Development of environment

⁸ Applicant's Guide, Priority Axis 2, SOP Environment 2013-2020, Development of integrated waste management systems and rehabilitation of contaminated historical sites.

infrastructure under conditions of efficient resource management', Specific Objective (OS) 3.1 'Reduction in the number of deposits Non-compliant and increase the preparedness for waste recycling in Romania'.

The signing of the contract for this second phase of the project provides the money for finalizing the infrastructure investments started through the Sectoral Operational Program Environment 2007-2013.

Since the project development process started in December 2009, the existing situation in the field of waste management in Bihor County, prior to the implementation of the project, refers to this year. The coverage of sanitation services was 80.10% per county, 67.66% in the rural area and 92.46% in the urban area, according to the questionnaires received from the mayoralities in the county.

On the basis of the consultants' estimates, in the year 2009 in Bihor County was generated a quantity of approx. 214.114 tons of municipal waste, of which 141.013 tons of household waste collected from the population, and 4.982 tons are the generated but not collected waste from the population. The collection of waste from 2009 until now is done from the gateway in both the rural and urban areas, except for the block areas where waste is collected in containers of 1.1 m³.

At the start of the project, most of the municipal waste generated was deposited. The collection of the collected waste was done in 2 non-compliant landfills in Valea lui Mihai and Salonta, which ceased the storage activity in 2017, and a warehouse according to Oradea. In addition to these deposits, there were 6 non-compliant class 'b' warehouses in the urban area which stopped storage according to GD no. 349/205 on waste disposal, in 2005 at Oradea, in 2009 in Aleșd and Beius, and in 2010 in Marghita, Ștei and Săcueni. The 185 unimproved storage areas in the rural area were closed until 16.07.2009, the date negotiated with the European Union.

By the end of 2009, 7 projects in the field of waste management were implemented in the county, 6 projects funded through PHARE CES 2004-2006 and a project funded by the Environment Fund. As a result of the implementation of these projects, in the county there was a transfer station to Aleșd, three sorting stations, of which 2 small capacity at Aleșd and Valea lui Mihai, and a large capacity sorting station in Oradea; 2 composting stations at Valea lui Mihai and Oradea, and equipment for waste collection and transport in Oradea, Beius, Aleșd, Valea lui Mihai and Girișul de Criș metropolitan area.

In addition to the above, in August 2005 in Oradea was commissioned the first ecological waste landfill in the region. The deposit was made under a public private partnership, the operator being S.C. ECOBIHOR S.R.L. Oradea city. This warehouse serves the city of Oradea and the localities in the metropolitan area, and in the future it will serve the entire Bihor County.⁹ The estimated projected capacity of the deposit is 3,800,000 m³, the total occupied area will be 22.7 ha. Which will ensure storage for a period of 20 years, until 15.08.2025. The capacity available at the end of 2009 was about 3,000,000 m³.

⁹ No. 41 / 31.08.2004 Decision of the Bihor County Council.

Regarding the EU waste management directives, they are applicable in Bihor County through the project presented below, a project initiated by the local public administration – the Bihor County Council.

I. Project description

The efficiency of an integrated waste management system is conditional on the optimal division of the territory into waste management areas and the allocation of localities to the same center where a common waste management infrastructure (transfer station, sorting station, etc.).

As far as Bihor County is concerned, following the analysis of the existing infrastructure, the relief, the quantities of waste generated and the consultation of the local beneficiaries, the county was divided into 6 waste management areas with centers in Oradea and Aleșd, Salonta, Beiuș, Marghita, Săcuieni and Valea lui Mihai. The areas are serviced by the new transfer and sorting stations, carried out within the project or already existing ones. Both the population and the quantities of waste generated were calculated for the reference year 2016. Also, at the basis of the infrastructure and equipment design, there is data on the generation of waste in 2016. The closure works were also carried out at the 6 non-compliant warehouses which stopped the storage in Oradea, Beiuș, Marghita, Aleșd, Săcuieni and Ștei, as well as to the two non-compliant landfills in Salonta and Valea lui Mihai, which decided to stop the storage at the start of project implementation.

The main objectives in the field of waste management for Bihor County are the following: collecting household waste from the entire population of the county; Implementation of separate collection of recyclable waste both in urban and rural areas; Achieving the highest possible degree of recovery of municipal waste and ensuring the fulfillment of targets on packaging waste; Reducing the amount of biodegradable waste to storage by composting and other treatment methods so as to ensure the achievement of the legislative targets; Closure of non-compliant warehouses.

II. The components of the project

Component 1, namely waste collection, includes the implementation of selective collection both in urban and rural areas. Selective collection refers to the separate collection of waste paper / cardboard – glass – plastic / metal for which the necessary bins have been purchased through the project. The trucks and containers for the residual fraction will be provided by future sanitation operators. This also includes the construction and endowment of 4 new transfer stations, the purchase of containers and means of transport for the existing transfer station, as well as the creation of a temporary storage platform, as follows: transfer station in Beiuș (new) with a Capacity of 16,100 tons / year, transfer station to Marghita (new) with a capacity of 10,600 tons / year, Salonta transfer station (new) with a capacity of 9,900 tons / year, transfer station in Săcuieni (new) A capacity of 13,000 tons / year, an Aleșd (existing) transfer station with a capacity of 12,700 tons / year and a temporary storage platform at Ștei (new) with a capacity of 3,500 tons / year.

For Oradea and Valea lui Mihai town where composting stations exist, the bins for the separate collection of biodegradable waste were purchased, 5,000 units. For Oradea and 3,000 units. For Valea lui Mihai.

Promotion of the individual composting of biodegradable waste in the rural area through the purchase of 20,000 pieces was achieved. Individual composting units.

Component 2, namely waste treatment, includes the construction of 3 new sorting stations to separate the recyclables separately collected on the three appropriately equipped facades (paper / cardboard – glass – plastic / metal) located in the following locations: Beiuș (capacity of 7,000 tons / Year), Marghita (capacity 4,500 tons / year), Salonta (capacity 4,500 tons / year); As well as a mechano-biological treatment plant (MBT) for the treatment of residual waste, including waste collected from the markets, with a capacity of 60,000 tons / year, located in Oradea.

Component 3, i.e. waste disposal, includes the closure of 8 non-compliant urban landfills from Oradea, Beiuș, Marghita, Salonta, Aleșd, Săcueni, Ștei and Valea lui Mihai, in accordance with the accession treaty provisions.

Component 4, namely technical assistance and public awareness, relates to performance during project implementation, project management and supervision of works.

Increased public awareness of waste management has been done through media awareness campaigns (TV and radio spots, newspaper ads, TV shows on local issues, etc.), school campaigns, the organization of Open public debates, the organization of a 'green local service' in large urban areas (municipalities), or other types of campaign (leaflets, brochures, surveys, etc.).

7. Conclusions

European policy on the environment is based on Articles 191 to 193 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Under Article 191, preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment and protecting human health are explicit objectives of EU environmental policy. Sustainable development is a dominant objective of the EU, which aims to ensure "a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment".¹⁰

The revised legislative proposal on waste sets clear targets for waste reduction and sets an ambitious and credible long-term waste management and recycling pathway. In order to ensure effective implementation, the waste reduction targets of the new proposal are accompanied by concrete measures to tackle barriers on the ground and different situations in EU Member States.

¹⁰ Treaty on European Union and Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Consolidated version 2012 / C 326/1) Article 3, paragraph 3.

According to EU legislation, only safe and controlled waste storage activities should take place in Europe. The Landfill Directive sets standards for the protection of human health and the environment, in particular surface water, groundwater, soil and air, from the negative effects of the collection, transport, storage, treatment and disposal of waste. It aims to prevent or reduce, as far as possible, the negative effects of waste disposal throughout the life-cycle of landfills.

The developments in environmental policy in Romania are therefore determined by EU regulations and directives. An important part of the challenge to implementation is the timely transposition by national authorities of EU environmental legislation into national law. Romania sometimes transposes environmental directives late. Legislation is generally transposed correctly, and when cases of non-compliance occur, the country cooperates and modifies its legislation accordingly. However, implementation remains the real challenge, as it emerges from the fact that Romania, although a new Member State, is one of the countries with the highest number of violations of environmental legislation, mainly in areas such as waste management (for example, Operation of non-compliant landfills), atmospheric pollution (e.g. exceedances of PM10 emission limit values), failure to adapt older large-scale combustion plants to EU standards, and authorizing projects without the necessary assessments and authorizations.¹¹

¹¹ European Commission: Evaluarea punerii în aplicare a politicilor de mediu ale UE Raport de țară – ROMÂNIA, COM(2017) 63 final, Homepage of the European Commission, in: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/pdf/report_ro_ro.pdf (03.02.2017.).